

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 12381 052246Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

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CNO WASHDC//OP-61//

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CINCPACFLT MAKALAPA HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 12381

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, XO

SUBJECT: KRASNAYA ZVEZDA ON THE FRASER VISIT AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

REF: CANBERRA 5623

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 12381 052246Z

1. SUMMARY. KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, AUGUST 3, MARKS THE END OF AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER FRASER'S VISIT TO THE U.S. WITH LENGTHY, NEGATIVE ARTICLE BY A. MALISHKIN ON AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN AND MILITARY POLICIES. ARTICLE ALSO MAKES NOTEWORTHY DEFENSE INTER ALIA, OF SOVIET PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN. ASTRALIANS HERE SEE PIECE AS FIRST MAJOR SIGN THAT SOVIETS ARE LOSING THEIR PATIENCE WITH FRASER, BUT NOTE THEY HAVE NOT YET GONE ALL THE WAY. END SUMMARY.

2. MALISHKIN SEES AUSTRALIA AS A MILITARY STRONG POINT IN THE CHAIN OF BASES WHICH HE CLAIMS THE U.S. IS BUILDING UP AROUND ASIA TO REPLACE THE BASES LOST IN INDOCHINA AND THAILAND. THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT IN AUSTRALIA IS SUPPORTING THE "NEW PACIFIC DOCTRINE" OF THE U.S. BY ITS SUPPORT OF AMERICAN MILITARY ACTIVITY IN ASIA, THE BUILDING OF THE MILITARY BASE ON DIEGO GARCIA, AND ALLOWING THE U.S. TO INCREASE ITS MILITARY PRESENCE ON THE "FIFTH CONTINENT." HE ASSERTS THAT THE U.S.-AUSTRALIAN COOPERATION IS TAKING ON A VERY DEFINITE "NUCLEAR COLOR", CITING U.S. BASES IN AUSTRALIA WHICH PLAY A "NOT UNIMPORTANT ROLE" IN U.S. NUCLEAR STRATEGY, ESPECIALLY FOR NUCLEAR SUBS IN THE PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEANS. ALLOWING U.S. "NUCLEAR SHIPS" TO VISIT AUSTRALIAN PORTS AND CORKBURN SOUND DEVELOPMENT ARE ALSO NOTED AS PART OF AUSTRALIA'S "DANGEROUS POLICY."

3. ALLEGED CONCERN OF OTHER STATES IN THE AREA OVER THE "DANGEROUS AND ADVENTURIST TENDENCIES" IN AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN POLICY FEATURES A QUOTE FROM "INDONESIAN OBSERVER" ON "AUSTRALIA'S COURSE TOWARDS MILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN." AUTHOR CLAIMS NO FAVORABLE COMMENTS FOR FRASER BY ASIANS, EXCEPT IN PEKING. UNNAMED FOREIGN PRESS QUOTE IS USED TO STATE THAT FRASER ON RECENT VISIT TO PRC RECEIVED "EXCEPTIONALLY WARM RECEPTION AS THANKS BY CHINESE FOR HIS ANTI-SOVIET VIEWS."

4. IN DISCUSSING INDIAN OCEAN, MALISHKIN SAYS AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT JUSTIFIES ITS POLICY THERE BY CITING THE "SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN." HE REJECTS THIS REASONING BY NOTING THAT THE INDIAN OCEAN LIES ON THE PATH BETWEEN THE SOVIET FAR EAST AND THE BLACK SEA AND THAT THE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 12381 052246Z

SOVIETS HAVE TRADE WITH THE COUNTRIES OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA. NATURALLY, THEREFORE, SOVIET SHIPS ARE IN THE OCEAN, SOME OF THEM MILITARY VESSELS. BUT THIS IS IN ACCORD WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW AND REPRESENTS A THREAT TO NO ONE. MALISHKIN ALSO NOTES THAT SOVIET GOVERNMENT HAS "EXPRESSED READINESS TO SUPPORT PROPOSALS TO TURN THE INDIAN OCEAN INTO A ZONE OF PEACE."

5. THE ARTICLE IS THE SHPAREST MEDIA EXPRESSION YET OF SOVIET DISSATISFACTION AT THE NEW COURSE ADOPTED BY AUSTRALIA IN RECENT MONTHS. IN DISCUSSING ARTICLE WITH AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY WE NOTED HARSHNESS OF TONE AND SHOTGUN-BLAST APPROACH. AUSTRALIAN EMBOFF (CRICK) AGREED THAT THIS WAS FIRST INDICATION THAT SOVIETS WERE LOSING PATIENCE WITH NEW CONSERVATIVE FOREIGN POLICY. APART FROM SMALL, INFREQUENT POTSHOTS IN KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, HE SAID, SOVIETS SEEMED UP TO NOW TO BE HOLDING TO SEE IF FRASER GOVERNMENT WOULD ADOPT POLICES LESS DISTASTEFUL TO USSR THAN PM'S PRESS STATEMENTS. APPARENTLY THEY THOUGHT WASHINGTON VISIT AND COMMUNIQUE WERE SUFFICIENTLY NEGATIVE FROM SOVIET VIEWPOINT TO MERIT A PUBLIC BLAST AT FRASER.

6.COMMENT. WE WOULD NOTE THAT BLAST WAS IN KRASNAYA ZVEZDA AND NOT PRAVDA, SO IT MAY BE THAT SOVS ARE HOLDING BACK THEIR BIG PUBLIC GUNS FOR THE TIME BEING. IT ALSO NOT COINCIDENCE THAT ARTICLE DID NOT APPEAR UNTIL DAY AFTER COMPLETION OF AUSTRALIAN-SOVIET BEEF DEAL (SEE CANBERRA 5623). ON INDIAN OCEAN, IT IS ALSO WORTH NOTING THAT MALISHKIN IS THE FIRST RECENT PRESS COMMENTATOR TO PICK UP PRIVATE SOVIET COMMENTS JUSTIFYING THE SOVIET "TRANSIT" PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN BECAUSE IT LINKS THE EUROPEAN AND FAR EASTERN PORTIONS OF THE USSR, AND TO CITE SOVIET SUPPORT FOR ZONE OF PEACE IN GANDHI VISIT DECLARATION AS EARNEST SIGN OF SOVIET GOOD INTENTIONS.
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